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## CROMWELL'S POLICY IN ITS ECONOMIC ASPECTS. II.

### III. *The Continental Project and the French Alliance.*

THE expedition to the West Indies, as well as the Dutch war, marks, as Mr. Gardiner has well said, "the decline of the spiritual ecstasies of Puritanism and the rise of the mundane spirit."<sup>1</sup> Cromwell's policy had become more and more one devoted merely to England's material greatness. Commercial and territorial expansion was the goal ever in view. From his lips there were many speeches in favor of an alliance of Protestantism against Catholicism, and the cause of his religion was unquestionably one to which he was sincerely devoted; but the fundamental motives for his policy were economic, and only to a minimum degree were his actions influenced by the "Protestant Interest." There is no justification for the view advanced by Seeley and Frederic Harrison that "the fundamental principle of the policy of the Protectorate . . . is the union of all the Protestant Powers of Europe under the leadership of England."<sup>2</sup> That Cromwell had such a plan is well known: in fact, it was a hobby of his, but one to which his actual policy was not subservient. He drew back whenever the consequences of this Protestant policy brought him into conflict with England's material greatness. His ideal was an anachronism, — a heritage of the Elizabethan era, — but in actual policy he was ahead of his times, the legitimate predecessor of Clive, Chatham and Cecil Rhodes. As Mr. Firth epigrammatically says: "Looked at from one point of view, he seemed as practical as a commercial traveller; from another, a Puritan Don Quixote." It was "the commercial traveller"

<sup>1</sup> Gardiner, *Commonwealth and Protectorate*, II, 478-479; *Cromwell's Place in History*, pp. 94-95.

<sup>2</sup> Seeley, *British Policy*, II, 46; Harrison, *Oliver Cromwell*, p. 218.

who acted, and the "Puritan Don Quixote" who dreamt and spoke.

Viewed from the standpoint of the Protestant Interest, Cromwell's great enemy was Spain. Yet for a long time he hesitated whether or not to make an alliance with this country. On the other hand, his natural friend was the Dutch republic, with which, in the opening years of his Protectorate, he was engaged in a fierce struggle. When, finally, Cromwell's desire to add the Spanish-American colonies to England's possessions brought about a break with Spain, it was with Catholic France that he made an alliance. And this alliance was directed against the Dutch even more than against Spain. The United Provinces stand out conspicuously as the great antagonist and enemy of England. Economic opposition to the Dutch is the fundamental note of Cromwell's policy after the conclusion of the West-Indian expedition. It was a policy which was in direct antithesis to his ideals, but one which was forced upon him by Dutch hostility and by the fact that economic forces made this hostility inevitable. It is characteristic of Cromwell, as "the most typical Englishman," that he abandoned his ideals, when he was brought face to face with the stern logic of economic facts.

In spite of the attack on the Spanish West Indies, it had been expected with some degree of assurance by Cromwell that peace would be preserved in Europe.<sup>1</sup> France had not resented the conquest of Acadia, nor was it inevitable that Spain should go to war on account of the attack on Hispaniola. The extent to which unofficial war was carried on by the European states in the seventeenth century is such that we can scarcely realize it, and nowhere was the guerilla warfare deemed more legitimate than on the Spanish Main. It was a reasonable assumption that Spain would not proclaim war. But Cardenas, the Spanish ambassador in England, was sincere when he said that giving up the West-Indian monopoly was equivalent to depriving his master of one of his eyes. Consequently war between England and Spain in Europe followed the West-Indian expedition.

<sup>1</sup> Clarke Papers, III, 205.

The effect of this war was to throw England into the hands of France. As soon as it was seen that Spain intended to resent the attack on her colonies, negotiations for a French alliance progressed with new zeal. A treaty was about to be concluded when Cromwell heard of the brutal treatment of the Waldenses in Piedmont by French troops returning from Italy. France's indirect connection with this persecution delayed the negotiations; but finally, in November, 1655, much to Mazarin's delight,<sup>1</sup> Cromwell concluded a treaty of commerce with France, which brought to an end the fierce guerilla war that had been carried on during the last six years.<sup>2</sup> This treaty<sup>3</sup> was, however, merely a prelude to the treaty of alliance which was concluded in 1657.<sup>4</sup> Mazarin had been holding back, but the success of Condé at Valenciennes made him again desirous of a closer bond with England.<sup>5</sup> This treaty of March 23, 1657, provided that Gravelines, Mardyke and Dunkirk were to be besieged by the joint forces of the allies, and that Dunkirk and Mardyke, when captured, were to be handed over to England. Cromwell, at the same time, renounced all pretensions to any other places in Flanders.

What did England want with Dunkirk, a port on the continent? What was Cromwell's object in trying to get possession of Dunkirk and its outpost Mardyke? Thurloe tells us that Cromwell "always much longed for" a footing on the continent.<sup>6</sup> From a document attributed to the same authority we learn that Cromwell was influenced by three reasons: in the first place, he would thereby secure himself from invasions on the part of Charles II and, at the same time, he himself would have a means of invading the continent, if he so desired; secondly, the possession of such a port would be "a bridle on

<sup>1</sup> Documents Inédits (ed. D'Avenel), VII, 127.

<sup>2</sup> Even at the time when this treaty was about to be concluded, hostilities between England and France on the sea continued. — *Ibid.*, VI, 40.

<sup>3</sup> Dumont, *Corps universel diplomatique*, vol. vi, part ii, p. 121.

<sup>4</sup> Guizot, *Histoire de la Révolution d'Angleterre*, IV, 597–605, prints the treaty *in extenso*; Dumont, vol. vi, part ii, p. 224, gives only an extract.

<sup>5</sup> A. Chéruel, *Histoire de France sous le Ministère de Mazarin*, III, 23.

<sup>6</sup> Thurloe, I, 761.

the Dutch"; and finally, Dunkirk was essential to the safety of English trade, which was disturbed by the pirates from that town and from Ostend.<sup>1</sup> The possession of Dunkirk would be a veritable thorn in the side of the Dutch, as England, with men-of-war on both sides of the Channel, could absolutely control this highway of commerce.

More specific reasons for acquiring Dunkirk are given in a document called "The Benefitt to bee in aid of the Place."<sup>2</sup> Among the advantages to be gained, those of an economic character stand out prominently in this paper. It was argued that the place was very convenient for European trade and that its possession would give access to Germany, "without being more behoulding to the Hollanders." Besides, Dunkirk was said to be "the fittest place in Chrissendom for the stapell of cloath, for ther you will have that great benefitt of the customs which now the Hollanders have of that commoedite." And, finally, it was contended that Dunkirk was a place "much covetted for fishing" and one of the cheapest places for ship-building. The general line of economic thought was that the possession of some port or ports on the continent would be of immense value to England in her commercial rivalry with the Dutch.<sup>3</sup>

This alliance of Cromwell with France has been frequently criticised as a monstrous error, contributing to the greatness of France during the following years. It has been held that, instead of allying himself with France, Cromwell should have nipped the rising power of that country in the bud.<sup>4</sup> In order

<sup>1</sup> This document is in Stowe Mss. 185, pp. 187-200, and is reprinted by Bischoffshausen, *Die Politik des Protector Oliver Cromwell*, Appendix, p. 187 *et seq.*; cf. also a different version, but the same idea, in Somers's Tracts, VI, 329-336, and in Bischoffshausen, *loc. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> Printed by Mr. Gardiner in *English Historical Review*, XI, 484-485.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Ludlow, *Memoirs*, II, 96. Despite the treaty of peace of 1654, ill feeling existed, on account of the still unsettled fishery dispute and on account of the still frequent conflicts in the East. See *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series*, 1656-1657, pp. 53, 57.

<sup>4</sup> This criticism appears in Ludlow, *Memoirs*, II, 3, and in other contemporary writings, such as *The World's Mistake in Oliver Cromwell* (London, 1668), p. 3; Montague Burrows, *History of the Foreign Policy of Great Britain*, p. 24, has revived this criticism; Mr. Hassall, *Social England*, IV, 260, has ably refuted it.

to keep the balance of power in Europe, it is claimed, Cromwell should have joined forces with Spain in her contest with France. It is not necessary to answer this criticism in detail. Those who are responsible for it have overlooked the essential fact that, while France was to be in the eighteenth century England's great antagonist, the Dutch republic was England's great rival in the seventeenth century. While this alliance with France was specifically directed against Spain, in a deeper and truer sense it was aimed against the Dutch republic. According to Thurloe, one reason that induced Cromwell to enter into the French alliance was that he might depend upon France against the Dutch, who were then trying to treat with Spain in a manner hostile to English trade and commerce. In addition, Thurloe says: "This the Protector did see, being always jealous of that people."<sup>1</sup> The territorial advantages to accrue to England, while to be gained at Spain's expense, were to be used to the detriment of Dutch commerce.<sup>2</sup>

The Dutch were not pleased at the prospect of having England as a neighbor on the continent and exhibited a good deal of annoyance at the Anglo-French treaty.<sup>3</sup> In March, 1657, the English ambassador in France wrote to Thurloe that "the Hollanders ill inclinations toward England continue; they have undertaken the transport of the Spanish money from the Canaries."<sup>4</sup> Spain made use of this feeling and endeavored to form an alliance with the Dutch, holding out as an inducement the prospect of free trade with the Spanish colonies.<sup>5</sup> In some quarters it was expected that the Dutch would openly ally themselves with Spain.<sup>6</sup>

At about the time that this alliance with France was consummated, France and the United Provinces were brought almost to the verge of war by De Ruyter's seizure of some French ships in the Mediterranean. France claimed that this

<sup>1</sup> Somers, Tracts, VI, 329-330; Bischoffshausen, Appendix, p. 197.

<sup>2</sup> A letter of Courtin to Bordeaux, February 2, 1657, mentions dread on the part of the Dutch that the Anglo-French alliance will molest their commerce. — Thurloe, VI, 105.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, VI, 100.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 87.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>6</sup> Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, 1656-1657, p. 339.

action of the Dutch admiral was unprovoked,<sup>1</sup> and the Dutch republic claimed that it was but a just act of reprisal.<sup>2</sup> It was expected that war would inevitably break out.<sup>3</sup>

The English ambassador in France, Lockhart, whom Clarendon has described as "a man of great address in treaty" and as one "who had a marvellous credit with the Cardinal,"<sup>4</sup> tried to avert the impending conflict between France and the United Provinces, in which it seemed inevitable that England must become involved.<sup>5</sup> He advised against a rupture with the Dutch as unseasonable. Lockhart was unquestionably acting on direct instructions from Cromwell in this matter,<sup>6</sup> and it is known that Cromwell approved of his conduct in the negotiations.<sup>7</sup>

The negotiations for enlisting Cromwell's support against the Dutch were, however, not carried on through Lockhart, but through the French ambassador in England, Bordeaux. Mazarin was confident that the English would, for commercial reasons, welcome a war between the French and the Dutch; and he adds: "Le Roy sera tres ayse que les Anglois fassent tout le commerce, et les favorisera pour cet effect."<sup>8</sup> In May, 1657, he wrote to Bordeaux that if war resulted, he should get a fleet from England; and at the same time, probably to excite Cromwell's anger, he pointed out the fact that the Dutch were helping the Spanish Plate fleet to escape the English men-of-war.<sup>9</sup>

In Dumont's collection there is printed a treaty between France and England, bearing date May 9, 1657.<sup>10</sup> This treaty was unquestionably never ratified,<sup>11</sup> and no record of it can be

<sup>1</sup> Documents Inédits, VII, 451, 458, 463.

<sup>2</sup> Lefèvre-Pontalis, John de Witt, I, 230; Chérueil, *op. cit.*, III, 58-59.

<sup>3</sup> Thurloe, VI, 42; Calendar of the Clarendon State Papers, III, 278, 287; Calendar State Papers, Domestic Series, 1656-1657, pp. 340-341, 352.

<sup>4</sup> Clarendon's History (ed. W. D. Macray), VI, 10.

<sup>5</sup> Thurloe, VI, 149-150.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 181; *cf.* also p. 220.

<sup>7</sup> Calendar of the Clarendon State Papers, III, 270.

<sup>8</sup> Documents Inédits, VII, 452.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 466; *cf.* also Thurloe, VI, 227, 262.

<sup>10</sup> Corps universel diplomatique, vol. vi, part ii, p. 178.

<sup>11</sup> Brienne, Mémoires, p. 150, says: "Ce fut à trois différentes fois qu'on s'accorda avec ces insulaires," omitting all reference to this treaty, and referring properly only to the duly ratified treaties, November 3, 1655, March 23, 1657, and March 28, 1658.

found in the English or in the French archives. It is not, however, purely apocryphal, as Guizot says,<sup>1</sup> but seems to have been some proposition for English help against the Dutch, made by Mazarin during his difficulty with the latter.

This document, which is entitled "Secretissimum inviolabile Foedus," after reciting the injury inflicted by De Ruyter on France, provides for a close offensive and defensive alliance of England and France against the Dutch. Cromwell was to furnish from thirty-six to forty vessels, and, in case of necessity, even a greater number, to attack the Dutch ships. For the war against Spain, Cromwell was also to furnish an army of at least 12,000 men. In return, Cromwell was to receive Ostend, Gravelines, Nieuwport and any other cities which were captured in the Spanish Netherlands. On the other hand, whatever Dutch cities might be captured were to be turned over to France. There were some other provisions in this unratified treaty referring to the Baltic difficulty, which we shall discuss later on.

From the material that is available, it is impossible to say what attitude Cromwell took towards this proposition. We know that the English ambassador in France had instructions to remain strictly neutral. But we also know that Cromwell's intention was to acquire more than one seaport town on the continent, and that his death alone interfered with this plan.<sup>2</sup> The idea of gaining the Flemish seaports was doubtless very attractive to Cromwell, and it seems probable that he considered Mazarin's proposition. The Dutch ambassador in England, Nieupoort, in June, 1657, wrote of the great naval preparations in England and added that he heard that Cromwell had "a great design in hand." But at the same time he wrote that Cromwell had assured him that there was no truth in the rumor that France was about to secure a number of ships in England.<sup>3</sup> Cromwell was, however, not entirely ingenuous in

<sup>1</sup> Guizot, *op. cit.*, IV, 367, n.

<sup>2</sup> Thurloe, I, 761; Bischoffshausen, *op. cit.*, Appendix, containing in parallel columns the three versions of Thurloe's account of English foreign affairs.

<sup>3</sup> Thurloe, VI, 302.



his diplomatic transactions. This rumor that Cromwell was about to aid France gained credence also in Paris, whence the Dutch ambassador there, Boreel, wrote that he had heard that Cromwell would no longer remain a friend to the United Provinces in case the Dutch broke with France.<sup>1</sup> Lockhart, not being informed of the negotiations carried on in England, categorically denied this.<sup>2</sup>

Whatever was the attitude taken by Cromwell, whether his neutrality was assumed or not, it is certain that, in case of war between France and the Dutch, it was expected in well-informed circles that England would aid France.<sup>3</sup> It is reported that English merchants in the United Provinces, in view of such an eventuality, had put their goods in the names of other people.<sup>4</sup> And we also know that the Duke of York went to The Hague, "hoping that if there be a breach betwixt the English and Dutch, he may have a squadron."<sup>5</sup> Mazarin certainly expected England to side with him.<sup>6</sup> In May, 1657, he wrote to the French ambassador in the United Provinces:

Nous prenons nos mesures pour armer, dans trois semaines ou un mois, quarante vaisseaux de guerre en Angleterre, et l'on en armera en France. . . . Et, à propos de commerce, j'ajouteray que l'on n'aura pas grande peine, la rupture arrivant, de mettre les Anglois et ceux de Hambourg en possession de tout le commerce que faisoient les Hollandois; ce que me faict juger que les Anglois mesmes au lieu de travailler a l'accomodement, pourroient bien, sous main, travailler a la rupture.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Thurloe, VI, 273.

<sup>2</sup> In May, 1657, Thurloe wrote to Henry Cromwell that both sides offered to make Cromwell the judge between them (Thurloe, VI, 261). In the same month, a little later, Lockhart wrote that Mazarin complained that he had heard that Cromwell would intervene in favor of the Dutch and also that the Dutch ambassador complained that he had heard that Cromwell would aid France. Lockhart says: "I did to each of them clear myself of both these aspersions" (Thurloe, VI, 287-288). On May 21 Lockhart wrote that Mazarin desired Cromwell's mediation in the Dutch difficulty (Thurloe, VI, 298).

<sup>3</sup> Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, 1656-1657, p. 382.

<sup>4</sup> Thurloe, VI, 247.

<sup>5</sup> Calendar Clarendon State Papers, III, 299.

<sup>6</sup> Documents Inédits, VII, 451.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, VII, 462 *et seq.*

The necessity for Cromwell's coming to a decision fell away, however, as the Dutch and French, thanks to the ability of De Thou, settled their grievances pacifically.<sup>1</sup>

To return now to the treaty of alliance of March 23, 1657. This treaty had been concluded for only a year and was renewed again a year later, March 23, 1658.<sup>2</sup> The net result of the military operations provided for in these treaties was, so far as England was concerned, that Dunkirk and its outpost Mardyke became English possessions. England had become again, as in the days before Mary, a continental power. The possession of Dunkirk was of great economic importance and was a menace to Dutch economic supremacy. As such, it was not viewed with satisfaction by the Dutch, who gave free vent to their disapproval at England's gaining this seaport. At one time it seemed as if, in consequence thereof, the Dutch might even join Spain in its war against England and France.<sup>3</sup> The prospect of a war with the Dutch did not deter Cromwell from pursuing his ends. As already stated, at the time of his death he was negotiating with France with a view to acquiring other Flemish seaports.<sup>4</sup> His plan was the comprehensive one of making the entire seacoast of the Spanish Netherlands English territory.

<sup>1</sup> Documents Inédits, VIII, 14; Pontalis, *op. cit.*, I, 231.

<sup>2</sup> Documents Inédits, VIII, Introd., p. ii *et seq.*, and p. 329, n.; Dumont, vol. vi, part ii, p. 224, prints only an extract.

<sup>3</sup> On May 21, 1658, Mazarin wrote to Bordeaux: "Pour ce que est des vingt-quatre vaisseaux que les Hollandois ont armez, le soupçon de S. Alt. [Oliver Cromwell] n'est pas mal fondé. J'ay envoyé, la nuit passée, un gentilhomme à Mardick pour advertir M. l'ambassadeur Lockhart que M. le comte de Brienne me mande de Paris que le fils de l'ambassadeur de Hollande l'estoit allé trouver pour luy dire que MM. les Estats luy avoient donné ordre de faire scavoir au Roy qu'ils ne verroyent pas avec plaisir les conquestes que les armes de Sa Mté. pourroyent faire du costé de la mer conjointement avec les Anglois et pour les partages avec L'Angleterre, adjoustant d'autres discours qui ont fait soupçonner à M. de Brienne que leur intention seroit de l'empescher, s'ils pouvoient; mais, pour moy, je ne les croy pas si hardis que d'oser declarer la guerre à ce royaume et à M. le Protecteur tout à la fois." — Documents Inédits, VIII, 365-366.

<sup>4</sup> *Cf.*, in addition to the authorities cited above, The World's Mistake in Oliver Cromwell (London, 1668), p. 4. This pamphlet is reprinted in the Harleian Misc., VII, 347. On the authorship of this pamphlet, see Guernsey Jones, The Diplomatic Relations between Cromwell and Charles X, Appendix.

This Dutch opposition to Cromwell's plans is the salient fact in the history of the last years of Cromwell's life.<sup>1</sup> Whitelocke recognized this clearly, when he said that most of the Dutch "were Enemies in heart to the Protector, and did but watch for an occasion to show it."<sup>2</sup> Their opposition was manifested not only towards the Anglo-French alliance, but also towards Cromwell's Baltic policy. In one of his last speeches Cromwell treats of his attitude towards the Dutch, who, as he insinuates, prefer profit to godliness. He accused the Dutch of being ungrateful for the assistance rendered them by Elizabeth and claimed that they had hired ships to bring over a Royalist army to England. Especially did he complain of Dutch intrigues in the Baltic, the source of naval stores so essential to the shipping interests of England.<sup>3</sup>

To understand what was happening in the North, we must retrace our steps. Shortly after the conclusion of the commercial treaty with England in 1655, Christina of Sweden abdicated. Her successor, Charles Gustavus, had inherited the martial ardor and ambitious plans of Gustavus Adolphus. His design was to make the Baltic a Swedish lake. These plans brought him into conflict with Poland, Brandenburg, Denmark and also with the Dutch.<sup>4</sup> For the successful accomplishment of his purpose he thought that he required English assistance; and, with this object in view, various embassies were sent to England. What Charles X failed to realize was that England, as little as the Dutch republic, could afford to see the Swedes supreme in the Baltic.<sup>5</sup> Her policy was not to allow the source of her naval stores to come absolutely under the control of one great power. Hence, the vague commercial privileges which Sweden offered in return for Cromwell's assistance were rejected.<sup>6</sup> Sweden's proposition practically amounted to an

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Bischoffshausen, *op. cit.*, p. 25; Firth, *Cromwell*, pp. 372, 373.

<sup>2</sup> Whitelocke, *Memorials*, p. 627.

<sup>3</sup> Carlyle, *op. cit.*, III, 277.

<sup>4</sup> Gardiner, *Commonwealth and Protectorate*, III, 426-430.

<sup>5</sup> Cromwell, says Thurloe, would not permit that "the Swede should conquer the Dane and possess all those countryes and, being truly become powerfull, engross the whole trade of the Baltique Sea." — Bischoffshausen, *op. cit.*, Appendix, p. 215.

<sup>6</sup> G. Jones, *op. cit.*, p. 24; cf. Masson, *Milton*, V, 246, 270.

offer of alliance against the Dutch. Cromwell, on his part, proposed a general alliance of all the Protestant powers of Europe, including the Dutch, against both branches of the house of Hapsburg.<sup>1</sup> This proposal did not meet with Charles X's approval; he was opposed to Cromwell's vague plan for a general Protestant alliance, and especially to the inclusion of the Dutch therein.<sup>2</sup> Of these long-drawn-out negotiations<sup>3</sup> in the years 1655 and 1656 nothing resulted but the unimportant commercial treaty of 1656.<sup>4</sup>

During the course of the following year, as Sweden's position in the Polish war became more difficult, Denmark determined to attack its ancient rival. In this, Denmark was supported by the Dutch, who expected to gain from Danish preponderance in the Baltic especial privileges for their commerce. Cromwell realized this and sent Meadowe as ambassador to Denmark, with the mission of bringing to an end the war between Sweden and Denmark. He was to point out

how much the freedom of Navigation and Commerce in the Baltic would be impeached thereby, to the prejudice of the Neighbouring Nations, but of none more than England, as continually fetching naval stores from those countries.<sup>5</sup>

At the same time Jephson was sent to Sweden. In his secret instructions he was told to ask for the temporary possession of Bremen, which then belonged to Sweden, as security for any assistance to be given by Cromwell.<sup>6</sup> Bremen would have been

<sup>1</sup> Whitelocke, *Memorials*, p. 624. In April, 1656, Cromwell said "that he was willing, in case of a nearer Alliance or of an Union concerning the Protestant Interest, to have Our Neighbors and Allies, the Low-Countries, included therein; and that he thought it did become him to have a particular care of them, and to take them into such a Treaty or Alliance; and that he was not willing to do any such thing without them." <sup>2</sup> Whitelocke, *Memorials*, pp. 619, 620, 621.

<sup>3</sup> During the course of these negotiations some interesting questions were raised as to what constituted contraband of war, and as to the rights of neutral ships and of neutral goods in times of war. See *ibid.*, pp. 621, 626-633.

<sup>4</sup> Dumont, *op. cit.*, vol. vi, part ii, pp. 125-127.

<sup>5</sup> Sir Philip Meadowe, *A Narrative of the Principal Actions occurring in the Wars betwixt Sweden and Denmark* (London, 1677), p. 17.

<sup>6</sup> Thurloe, VI, 479. Instructions of August 22, 1657. On a previous occasion also Cromwell had asked for possession of Bremen as a guaranty; see G. Jones, *op. cit.*, pp. 49-50.

of enormous value to English commerce, and Cromwell's selection of this city is significant. Though only temporary possession was asked, Cromwell probably reasoned that it could easily become permanent. For the present, however, nothing came of this attempt at mediation, as neither Sweden nor Denmark was anxious for peace.<sup>1</sup>

At about the same time as this embassy of Meadowe, the Swedish ambassador in England proposed an alliance of Sweden and England against Denmark. Sweden, in order to restore the balance of power in the Sound, was to resume possession of its ancient provinces on the Scandinavian side of the Sound, which was then held by Denmark.<sup>2</sup> In return, Cromwell was offered various German territories, such as Oldenburg and Münster; or, if he did not care to gain a foothold in Germany, he could have had some Danish land.<sup>3</sup> Similar proposals were made later, even Bremen being offered to Cromwell.<sup>4</sup>

In the unratified treaty between England and France of May 9, 1657,<sup>5</sup> there are several clauses bearing on the Baltic question. France and England agreed to assist Sweden in its war against Denmark, and with this object in view Cromwell was to capture the forts controlling the entrance to the Baltic. Whatever territory was acquired, either at the expense of Denmark or at that of any other country, was to be disposed of by Cromwell as he thought best, provided that English vessels might have no advantage over those of France in going through the Sound. It was to some plan such as this that the author of *The World's Mistake in Oliver Cromwell*, an attack on Cromwell published in 1668, referred when he said: "I am not ignorant that this error is excused, by pretending that we were to have had Elsinore and Cronenburge Castle, . . . by which we should have been Masters of the Sound, and consequently of the Baltick."

<sup>1</sup> G. Jones, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 57.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 59, 66-67.

<sup>5</sup> Dumont, vol. vi, part ii, p. 178, clauses xiii-xviii.

We do not know exactly what attitude Cromwell took toward these propositions. It seems probable that his plan was to take advantage of Sweden's difficulties and to gain either Bremen or the control of the Sound forts. Nothing came of these plans, from the fact that Sweden, contrary to all expectations, did not need foreign aid. Notwithstanding the fact that Poland, Brandenburg, the German emperor, Denmark and the Dutch were arrayed against him, Charles Gustavus emerged victor in the conflict. Denmark was overrun and was completely at his mercy. Cromwell, though friendly to Sweden, did not wish matters to go too far; he could not allow Sweden to become absolutely mistress in the Baltic. Hence, in conjunction with France, he intervened and brought about the peace of Roeskilde, February, 1658.

The English mediator took an active part in the negotiations leading up to the treaty, preventing Sweden from asking too much and seeing to it that nothing was done prejudicial to the interests of England. He especially objected to the proposition to join Norway to Sweden, because it would give Sweden the sole possession of the source of naval stores, — "too great a Treasure," as he said, "to be entrusted in one hand."<sup>1</sup> The chief provision of the final treaty was that giving Sweden possession of the Danish provinces on the Scandinavian side of the Sound.<sup>2</sup> "By this means," as Meadowe says, "the Swede is become Master of one Bank of the Sound as the Dane is of the other."<sup>3</sup> This treaty was of immense importance to England. It secured the neutrality of the Baltic. No longer was the entrance to this sea, one of the chief commercial arteries, under the control of a single power, and that one in close alliance with England's most bitter rival, the United Provinces. With Sweden in control of one side of the Sound, England's commerce in the Baltic was apparently safe.

<sup>1</sup> Meadowe, *op. cit.*, p. 58. Cf. also some correspondence of Thurloe and Meadowe, ed. by Edward Jenks, *English Historical Review*, VII, 720-742.

<sup>2</sup> "Sueciae Regibus ac Regnis cedantur Provinciae Halland, Scania, Blekingia, Bomholmia." Halland had, however, been in Swedish possession since the treaty of Bromsebro, 1644. — Meadowe, pp. 3-4; Jones, p. 19.

<sup>3</sup> Meadowe, p. 60.

*IV. The Regulation of Colonial Commerce.*

The general effect of the Civil War on the English colonies in America was to lessen their dependence on the mother country. This was true of Puritan New England, of Royalist Barbadoes and of Virginia, with its mixed population. After the execution of Charles I, Barbadoes rose in open insurrection,<sup>1</sup> while Virginia passed an act declaring the execution and trial to be treason and proclaiming Charles II as legitimate king.<sup>2</sup> The course of events in some of the lesser West-Indian islands was similar. Parliament's answer to this insurrectionary spirit was the act of October, 1650.<sup>3</sup> This act contains two important provisions, differing greatly in scope and character. By the first of these provisions, all who had been guilty of the acts of rebellion mentioned above in Virginia, Barbadoes, Antigua and Bermuda were declared traitors and were forbidden to have any commercial relations with any other people whatsoever. This provision in the act of 1650 was purely punitive and political in character. By the second provision of this act, ships of any foreign nation were forbidden "to come to, or Trade in, or Traffique" with any of the English colonies in America, unless a special license to do so had been first obtained from Parliament or the Council of State. It is stated in the act that this second provision was to prevent enemies of the new government in England from being brought to the English colonies, as had happened, for instance, in Barbadoes. On its face, therefore, it would seem that this provision was also political in character. As a matter of fact, it was a commercial act, securing, on the pretense of political safety, a monopoly of the trade with all the American colonies to English ships. The importance of this provision has been overlooked by a number of historians, who have regarded the act as purely punitive<sup>4</sup> and temporary<sup>5</sup> in

<sup>1</sup> Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series, 1584-1660, pp. 342, 343, 350, 390.

<sup>2</sup> Hening, I, 359-361.

<sup>3</sup> Scobell, II, 132-134.

<sup>4</sup> Bruce, Economic History of Virginia, I, 349.

<sup>5</sup> Ugo Rabbeno, The American Commercial Policy, p. 13.

character. Even Mr. Firth is guilty of this oversight. Ignoring the act of 1650 entirely, he says that the Navigation Act of 1651 "was the first attempt on the part of England to legislate for the colonies as a whole, and to treat them as integral parts of one political system."<sup>1</sup> What Mr. Firth says of the act of 1651 is true of the act of 1650. The Navigation Act proper of 1651 merely provided that, under certain conditions, goods might be imported only in English or colonial vessels. Goods could be exported in foreign vessels, if they had come there in ballast, and under certain conditions foreign vessels could trade with the colonies. On the other hand, the act of 1650 was much broader in scope. It absolutely prohibited foreign vessels from trading with the colonies; hence nothing could be either imported or exported in such vessels. It is true that it was stated in the act that the Council of State or Parliament might give licenses to trade contrary to its provisions. But from the evidence available we know that very few licenses<sup>2</sup> were granted; and, besides, the system in itself was too cumbersome to mitigate the act in practice. What England wanted by this act was a monopoly of trade with her colonies. This will be apparent from what follows.

In order to reduce the rebellious colonies to subjection, a fleet had been sent out under Sir George Ayscue. At Barbadoes it was found that trade with the Dutch was very freely practiced, and a number of Dutch vessels there were seized, in accordance with the act of 1650.<sup>3</sup> Barbadoes surrendered to this expedition, and in the articles of surrender it was provided that the island was "to have as great freedom of trade as ever."<sup>4</sup> The smaller West-Indian islands quickly followed the example in surrendering.<sup>5</sup> Virginia had protested vigorously against the act of 1650, claiming that it was due to the

<sup>1</sup> Firth, *Cromwell*, pp. 392-393.

<sup>2</sup> For a license to trade contrary to this act, see *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series*, 1584-1660, p. 356.

<sup>3</sup> Whitelocke, *Memorials*, p. 498.

<sup>4</sup> *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series*, 1675-1676, Addenda, 1574-1674, pp. 85-86.

<sup>5</sup> Gardiner, *Commonwealth and Protectorate*, II, 77-78.



“avarice of a few interested persons, who endeavour to rob us of all we sweat and labour for.”<sup>1</sup> This colony, however, likewise soon submitted to Parliament; and in the articles of surrender it was provided, as in the case of Barbadoes, that “the people of Virginia have free trade as the people of England do enjoy to all places and with all nations.”<sup>2</sup> This provision in the articles of surrender freed the colonists from the first provision of the act of 1650. It allowed them to trade with all nations. It did not, however, as was contended by Virginia,<sup>3</sup> allow foreign ships to trade with them. This contention about the articles of surrender was also raised subsequently by the Dutch ambassador in England. The expedition that sailed to attack the Spanish power in the West Indies had stopped on its way at Barbadoes and had seized a number of Dutch vessels found trading there.<sup>4</sup> Nieupoort protested, claiming that the act of 1650 was only a punitive measure and that the articles of surrender did not do away with this act. He was answered that by an act of Parliament such commerce was forbidden.<sup>5</sup>

England's monopoly of trade with her colonies received also the sanction of international recognition. When Whitelocke was ambassador in Sweden this subject was discussed very frequently and, at that time, Sweden tried to have the act of 1650 modified.<sup>6</sup> In the treaty of 1654 between Sweden and England nothing is mentioned about this monopoly; but in the treaty of 1656 it is specifically stated that, despite the fact that commerce with the English colonies in America is prohibited to foreigners, Cromwell would grant licenses to those Swedes who should ask him privately, provided they had letters of recommendation from the King of Sweden.<sup>7</sup> This English monopoly is likewise specifically recognized in the treaty of peace between England and Denmark in 1654.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Virginia Historical Magazine*, I, 81.

<sup>2</sup> Hening, I, 364. <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 559-601.

<sup>4</sup> Thurloe, III, 158, 254; Venables, Narrative (ed. Firth), p. 10.

<sup>5</sup> Thurloe, III, 749. See also Nieupoort's other letters about this, *Ibid.*, IV, 17, 214, 258-259.

<sup>6</sup> Whitelocke, Journal, II, 21, 30, 50, 102.

<sup>7</sup> Dumont, vol. vi, part ii, pp. 125-127.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 92, art. iii.

We have other evidence that Cromwell considered that the act of 1650, in so far as it prohibited foreign vessels from trading with the colonies, had not been affected by the articles of surrender of Virginia and Barbadoes. The commander of the squadron in American waters in 1655 was specifically instructed to seize all ships trading contrary to the act of 1650.<sup>1</sup> Another naval officer had received similar instructions.<sup>2</sup> In Barbadoes some Dutch vessels had been seized trading, as a contemporary writes, in opposition to the statutes of October 3, 1650, and October 9, 1651.<sup>3</sup>

It is difficult to say to what extent this act of 1650 was enforced.<sup>4</sup> The age was, in comparison to ours, a lawless one, especially on the sea. The colonies, chiefly Barbadoes and Virginia, found it to their advantage to ship in Dutch vessels on account of the cheaper freight rates. The act was a severe burden on them, and they had a strong inducement to violate it. Virginia, in her protest against the stoppage of Dutch trade, admitted that there was some violation of the act.<sup>5</sup> In Barbadoes a jury found for the foreigners, in the case of the seizure of some vessels trading contrary to the acts of 1650 and 1651.<sup>6</sup> In this colony there was "an especial fondness" for trade with the Dutch.<sup>7</sup> According to Hutchinson, the acts were not enforced in Massachusetts.<sup>8</sup> On the other hand, we hear of the seizure of a great number of vessels that had violated the act.<sup>9</sup> The general impression given by the evidence is that the act was enforced to the extent that the imperfect control of England over her colonies allowed, and that English men-of-war invariably enforced the law when they saw it violated.

<sup>1</sup> Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series, 1675-1676, p. 99.

<sup>2</sup> Thurloe, III, 754. See also letter of Modyford, mentioning the seizure of two Dutch vessels trading contrary to this act. — Thurloe, III, 565.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, III, 249.

<sup>4</sup> Beer, Commercial Policy of England, pp. 32-34.

<sup>5</sup> Thurloe, V, 80.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, III, 249.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, III, 142, 249.

<sup>8</sup> Hutchinson, History of Massachusetts, I, 174.

<sup>9</sup> Hening, I, 382; Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series, 1584-1660, pp. 364, 467; Thurloe, III, 158, 565, 754; Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series, 1675-1676, pp. 94-95.

The act of 1650 was the first piece of legislation affecting the colonies as a whole. It forms the bridge linking the haphazard individual policy of James I and Charles I with the well-rounded and complete colonial system developed under the later Stuarts. It was the only important colonial regulation that dates from these years. In minor ways, however, colonial commerce was encouraged. The Stuart prohibition<sup>1</sup> of growing tobacco in England, in order to give colonial tobacco a monopoly of the market, was continued.<sup>2</sup> For the encouragement of colonial sugar and ginger these articles were given a preferential duty over foreign products.<sup>3</sup> Then the export tax on geldings sent to the colonies was reduced.<sup>4</sup> In order to develop Jamaica, the export duty was at one time remitted on a quantity of articles.<sup>5</sup> A beginning was also made of the policy of developing naval stores in the colonies,<sup>6</sup> which, at a subsequent date, became very comprehensive in application.<sup>7</sup> In the internal affairs of the colonies Cromwell practically did not interfere at all.<sup>8</sup>

The influence of Cromwell on the destinies of the East India Company was, as its latest historian has ably shown, of great importance. Under Cromwell, Hunter says, "the corporation passed, with little recognition of the change at the time, from its mediæval to its modern basis."<sup>9</sup> "Cromwell viewed the India trade from a national standpoint," he adds, "and regarded the Company as one of the several alternative methods

<sup>1</sup> Beer, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

<sup>2</sup> Scobell, II (April 1, 1652), 187, 238; Whitelocke, Memorials, p. 570. See also petition of planters of English tobacco, in Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, 1656-1657, p. 5.

<sup>3</sup> Scobell, II, 387.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 375.

<sup>5</sup> Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, 1656-1657, p. 6.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, Colonial Series, 1675-1676, p. 87.

<sup>7</sup> Lord, Industrial Experiments in the British Colonies; Beer, *op. cit.*, pp. 91-103.

<sup>8</sup> See Cromwell's letters on the boundary disputes between Virginia and Maryland, Carlyle, *op. cit.*, letters 196 and 203. Prowse, the historian of Newfoundland, says: "Even in our Island, the sagacious statesmanship and firm strong hand of Cromwell made itself felt." History of Newfoundland, p. 159. Cf. also pp. 160-164. Lord Willoughby's small colony in Surinam was, as Mr. Lucas says, "left very much to itself" (Historical Geography, II, 272).

<sup>9</sup> Hunter, India, II, 102, 103.

for conducting it . . . ; throughout he had the interest not of the Company, but of the nation in mind." <sup>1</sup> Yet this decisive influence of Cromwell on the history of the East India Company has, as Hunter points out, been in general ignored by historians. <sup>2</sup>

We have already seen that one of the causes of the Dutch war was the conflict of the two rival nations in the East, and also that the peace of 1654 gave the English Company some reparation for the injuries it had suffered at the hands of the Dutch. The efforts of the English Company after 1654 were primarily devoted to strengthening its position at home, by securing a new charter and by obtaining an absolute monopoly of English trade with the East Indies. There was a strong feeling in England that the trade to India should be open and free to all merchants. Even the merchants within the company clamored for the privilege of trading as individuals. <sup>3</sup> This matter was discussed at length by the government, as a matter of great national importance. <sup>4</sup> Cromwell took a long time to decide the question, and at one time he seemed to incline to the view of those demanding a less rigid monopoly. He allowed a number of merchants to trade privately to India <sup>5</sup>; and, in consequence thereof, it was expected both at home and in the United Provinces that the East India Company would be dissolved and that the Indian trade would be thrown open to the whole nation. <sup>6</sup> These licenses were, however, only tentative, and the final conclusion reached by Cromwell and the Council of State was in favor of the company. It was decided that the trade of India should not be thrown open to the whole nation and also that the members of the company could not trade as individuals. The East India Company, reorganized on a joint-stock basis, was to have the exclusive monopoly of the trade.

<sup>1</sup> Hunter, *India*, II, 107.

<sup>2</sup> From Hunter's sweeping criticism, the admirable sketch of Sir Alfred Lyall should be excepted. Cf. *The Rise of the British Dominion in India*, p. 20.

<sup>3</sup> Bruce, *Annals*, I, 492.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 502.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 508; Hunter, II, 121.

<sup>6</sup> Bruce, I, 509; Thurloe, III, 80.

The East India Company had been originally organized on the basis of subscriptions for a single joint voyage, the profits of which were to be divided among the subscribers. This system, whose weaknesses are patent, was soon changed to the system of subscriptions to a series of joint voyages for a number of years. Thus, there was no continuity in the life of the company; it was merely an association, or what modern finance would call a syndicate, having in hand commercial operations extending over a limited number of years. The inevitable breakdown of this system led to the demand for a less rigid monopoly of the East India trade mentioned above.

In 1656 the company petitioned for a renewal of its charter, with additional privileges. This petition Cromwell personally referred to the Council of State.<sup>1</sup> The committee to whom this matter was handed over reported in favor of a united joint stock, which report was adopted by the Council and by Cromwell.<sup>2</sup> A new charter<sup>3</sup> was granted in 1657, under which the East India Company became a corporation whose existence was continuous. The capital was subscribed, not for one voyage or for a series of voyages, but practically in perpetuity; and the company, under this charter, assumed its modern character. Of Cromwell's connection with this, Hunter says:

He found the English in the East struggling, humiliated, in despair. He left them with their future assured. He was the first ruler of England who realized that the India trade was no private preserve of the sovereign and his nominees, but a concern of the nation, to be maintained by national diplomacy and defended by the national arms.<sup>4</sup>

#### V. *Summary and Criticism.*

Under Cromwell there was a sudden expansion of English maritime power and a vast extension of its usefulness to the nation. From this period date the permanent Mediterranean and West-Indian squadrons and the naval station in North

<sup>1</sup> Bruce, I, 504.

<sup>2</sup> Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, 1656-1657, p. 272; Bruce, I, 516.

<sup>3</sup> Bruce, I, 529; Macpherson, *European Commerce with India*, p. 124.

<sup>4</sup> Hunter, II, 141.

America.<sup>1</sup> The conscious development of the English naval power was primarily due to political causes — to the transference of the scene of the Civil War from the land to the sea. But this enormous increase in sea power was in itself of great benefit to English commerce. Sea power was, at that time, an essential prerequisite to successful international trade; for armed commerce was not the exception, but the rule. We have already seen how this navy was used against the United Provinces, France, Spain and Portugal to secure England's economic development. It was also used to great effect against that scourge of seventeenth-century commerce, the pirates from Dunkirk and Ostend<sup>2</sup> and from the Mohammedan states on the southern shore of the Mediterranean. These corsairs had been left practically unmolested by the other powers,<sup>3</sup> and it remained for Cromwell to take energetic measures to protect English commerce from them. They carried on their operations on a large scale, and at one time even "held command of the channel."<sup>4</sup> Cromwell put a stop to this outrageous state of affairs and freed English commerce for the time being from this incubus.<sup>5</sup>

Cromwell was essentially the child of his times — the product of a curious blending of commercial shrewdness and religious zeal. Mr. Gardiner has aptly called him the most typical Englishman; yet he is, perhaps in a truer sense, the most typical Yankee. Despite the religious symbolism and phraseology which burden his speeches, his mind was a very practical one. His son was not to be brought up on theology. "I would have him mind and understand Business, read a little History, study the Mathematics and Cosmography," writes Cromwell.<sup>6</sup> In matters of trade he took a keen and lively interest.<sup>7</sup> In addition to the various enterprises described above, Cromwell had

<sup>1</sup> M. Oppenheim, "The Navy of the Commonwealth," *English Historical Review*, XI, 20.      <sup>2</sup> Thurloe, I, 117.      <sup>3</sup> Montagu Burrows, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

<sup>4</sup> M. Oppenheim, "Royal Navy under Charles I," *English Historical Review*, IX, 113-114.

<sup>5</sup> Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, 1656-1657, pp. 49, 129; Carlyle, pp. 68-69; Firth, Cromwell, pp. 377-378; Gardiner, Commonwealth and Protectorate, III, 376-386.      <sup>6</sup> Carlyle, I, 397.      <sup>7</sup> Whitelocke, Memorials, pp. 617-618.

in mind at one time the capture of Gibraltar. "If possessed and made tenable by us," he asks, "would it not be both an advantage to our trade and an annoyance to the Spaniards?"<sup>1</sup> Then Cromwell's advocacy of the legal return of the Jews to England was based primarily on commercial grounds.<sup>2</sup>

The initial difficulty that confronts us in criticising Cromwell's policy is the shortness of the period during which he had complete control of affairs — five years. His death left his plans uncompleted and the Restoration meant, in many respects, a change in policy. Yet Cromwell's policy was not so ephemeral as Seeley considers it. The only important reversal of his policy was the retrocession of Dunkirk to France by Charles II. Cromwell's scheme of making England a continental power came to nothing. Yet it cannot be said that his plan was erroneous in conception. It is true, it was not taken up by subsequent statesmen; but this proves nothing, as the accession of William III to the throne of England did away with the necessity thereof. The Revolution of 1688 marks the sacrifice of the United Provinces, as a naval and expanding colonial power, to England. In the long war carried on against France by England and the United Provinces under William III, England did everything to foster the development of her colonial and sea power; while the Dutch bore the brunt of the land war and their navy was allowed to decline. When finally peace was declared, the United Provinces received merely a rectification of their frontier; while England not only gained commercial privileges from France and Spain, but also added to her empire many valuable possessions, amongst which were Gibraltar and Nova Scotia.<sup>3</sup>

A marked characteristic of Cromwell is his intense patriotism and pride of race. In his speech before Parliament in 1657, he said:

Truly, I shall in a word or two congratulate you with good you are in possession of, and in some respect I also with you. God hath

<sup>1</sup> Carlyle, III, 100; *cf.* also p. 113. See also Montague's answer to this proposition, Thurloe, V, 67-70.

<sup>2</sup> Lucien Wolf, *Menasseh Ben Israel's Mission to Oliver Cromwell*.

<sup>3</sup> *Cf.* Mahan, *op. cit.*, pp. 61-62.

bestowed upon you, and you are in possession of it, — Three Nations, and all that appertains to them. . . . This is furnished — give me leave to say, for I believe it is true, — with the best People in the world, possessing so much soil. . . . And in this People, in the midst of this People, “you have what is still more precious” a People . . . that are to God “as the apple of His Eye.” . . . A People of the blessing of God; a People under His safety and protection.<sup>1</sup>

His overweening pride of race induced the belief that naught but success could befall any efforts of England. This explains his utter disregard of the sensibilities and rights of other states. Cromwell made England the most powerful state of his time, but also the state that was most disliked. “His friendship,” as Clarendon says, “was current at the value he put upon it” and “it was hard to discover which feared him most, France, Spain or the Low Countries.”<sup>2</sup> This chauvinism made him also prone to underestimate the amount of opposition he was bound to encounter and led to that recklessness which is characteristic of his policy. The West-Indian scheme was conceived on broad lines, but the expedition was handicapped at the outset by hopelessly inadequate equipment. Cromwell’s plans were very far reaching, yet it is questionable if they were not too far reaching, as it is probable that they would have bankrupted England. As Mr. Gardiner says, “he was attempting the hopeless task of supporting a policy of the eighteenth century on the finances of the seventeenth.”<sup>3</sup>

A fundamental characteristic of English colonization is the fact that it has been due, in the main, to private initiative.<sup>4</sup> The development of the English empire has been a healthy, natural growth, each acquisition of new territory having become inevitable through economic conditions. The preëxistence of valuable interests has forced the government, usually against

<sup>1</sup> Carlyle, III, 164-167.

<sup>2</sup> Clarendon, *History* (ed. W. D. Macray), VI, 94.

<sup>3</sup> Gardiner, *English Historical Review*, XI, 160; *Cromwell’s Place in History*, p. 101.

<sup>4</sup> Bonnassieux, *Les Grandes Compagnies de Commerce*, p. 167, contrasts this development with the diametrically opposed French conditions.



its will, to add to its colonies. Napoleon could not understand why the English had derived so little benefit from their long and finally victorious contest with him. He said that "probably for a thousand years such another opportunity of aggrandizing England will not occur. In the position of affairs nothing could have been refused to you." And he added: "It was ridiculous to leave Batavia to the Dutch, and Bourbon and Pondicherry to the French." "Your ministers, too," he said, "should have stipulated for a commercial monopoly in the seas of India and China. You ought not to have allowed the French or any other nation to put their nose beyond the Cape."<sup>1</sup> In a word, the policy of the government has always lagged behind the needs of the mercantile classes. The English government has almost uniformly represented the conservative spirit in expansion.

The chief exception to this normal development of the British empire is found in the Cromwellian epoch. At that time the colonial policy was far in advance of the desires of the English people and of the needs of commerce. The attack on the Spanish power in America found extreme disfavor in English commercial centres. Cromwell's plans were in advance of his times and were prophetic of future developments. His policy was un-English, so far as he did not allow the commercial to precede the colonial development, but tried to reverse the order.

Cromwell's influence on the expansion of the English state has been recognized, to a certain extent, by various writers. Carlyle, in eloquent words, attributes England's "West-Indian Interest" to Cromwell's spirit of determination.<sup>2</sup> Goldwin Smith calls him the "father of our naval greatness."<sup>3</sup> Seeley, while denying to Cromwell the merit of deliberate policy, says his fabric "revealed for the first time the large possibilities of our state. It is a first sketch of the British Empire."<sup>4</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> Rosebery, Napoleon, pp. 195-196. On the attitude of the English government at this time, see H. E. Egerton, Sir Stamford Raffles.

<sup>2</sup> Carlyle, III, 85.

<sup>3</sup> Three English Statesmen, p. 99.

<sup>4</sup> British Policy, II, 63.

most recent and the most brilliant of Cromwell's biographers, John Morley, has no sympathy with the view that depicts Cromwell "as the conscious author of a great system of colonial expansion." He concedes that such ideas were then alive, but maintains that "Cromwell's colonial policy was that of his predecessors, as it was that of the statesmen who followed him."<sup>1</sup> This view seems wholly untenable. It is not claimed that the ideas that he embodied originated with him, and that the British empire is the work of one man. The growth of this great empire has been the outcome of social forces, and in this it differs from no other historical phenomenon. The rôle of the great man in history is to recognize the tendency of events and to use the power intrusted to him in quickening the development towards the inevitable goal, though it be but dimly perceived. It is only in this sense that the name of any man can be connected with a great historic movement. Cromwell is worthy of a position in that small group of illustrious men who are in this manner identified with the growth of the British empire. His time was not wasted, as most writers suppose, in fighting a windmill such as the imaginary Anti-Protestant Alliance of all Catholic Europe. A great part of his time and energy was devoted to furthering the expansion of England's commercial and colonial empire.

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<sup>1</sup> John Morley, *Cromwell*, pp. 447-448.